

Jan. 4, 2021

From: State of Montana HR <montanaHR@mt.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 4, 2021 6:54 PM
Subject: COVID-19 updates for State Employees enclosed

Dear State Employees,

You undoubtedly have questions regarding telework, leave, masks, and other topics as we all continue to navigate the COVID environment. To promote a safe and productive work environment, the Gianforte administration will continue the state employee procedures currently in place. The Governor and his staff will continuously monitor and evaluate work situations and the impact of COVID in Montana and be flexible in addressing issues as they arise. As of now, the current state is expected to be maintained through this spring.

State employees should continue to follow the guidance about remote work and mask wearing previously provided by the State Human Resources Division, provided below for your convenience:

Remote Work

The previously-issued [Return to Worksite Stage One Guidelines](#) provides detailed information about remote work and guidelines for those employees working in State offices or facilities. An employee who is vulnerable or high risk, or resides with someone who is high risk, should consult with their manager to establish a remote work schedule. In all other circumstances, you should, with authorization from your supervisor, follow the directions below:

1. Employees who can effectively work remotely should continue to do so.
2. Employees whose job responsibilities are necessary for agencies to effectively operate public-facing offices should continue working from their regular worksites.
3. Employees whose job responsibilities include field work, for example appraisers and inspectors, may be asked to continue or resume their job duties following the mask guidance that is in place.
4. Employees who cannot work remotely because their job duties do not allow for remote work should continue to report to their regular work locations.

Face Masks

Employees working in public-facing roles must continue to wear face masks at work. Employees who are working in the office, but who do not work in public-facing roles or in the areas open to the public, must wear face masks when in meetings with others and when in common areas. Employees do not have to wear masks when alone in their private offices.

COVID-Related Leave Time

The paid leave that has been provided by federal law expired December 31, 2020. As of January 1, 2021, federal law allows, but does not require, employers to extend paid sick leave and emergency family and medical paid leave to employees through March 2021.

Effective January 1, 2021, you may continue to use the leave provided by the federal law and the original 80 hours of paid COVID sick leave provided by the State, if you have not already exhausted the leave originally provided. No additional paid leave will be offered if you have used all available COVID paid leave in 2020.

The provisions for using COVID-related leave remain the same and are detailed in the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act Policy](#).

If you have questions, please contact your agency HR professionals or the State Human Resources Division who are ready to assist.

Thank you,

State Human Resources